

The Great Lakes

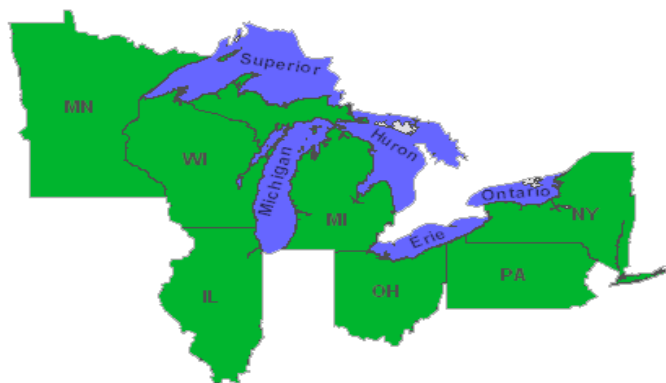
What?

There are five Great Lakes. If you put all the Great Lakes together, they would be the same size as the United Kingdom! They have more fresh water than anywhere else and 30,000 islands. Fresh water is water found in lakes and rivers, but not in the sea.

It is easy to remember names of the Great Lakes. Just take the first letter of each lakes and spell out the word **HOMES** - **H**uron, **O**ntario, **M**ichigan, **E**rie and **S**uperior.

Who?

Seven states have shores on the Great Lakes. They are Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York.



Where?

The Great Lakes are in the north of the United States, next to Canada.

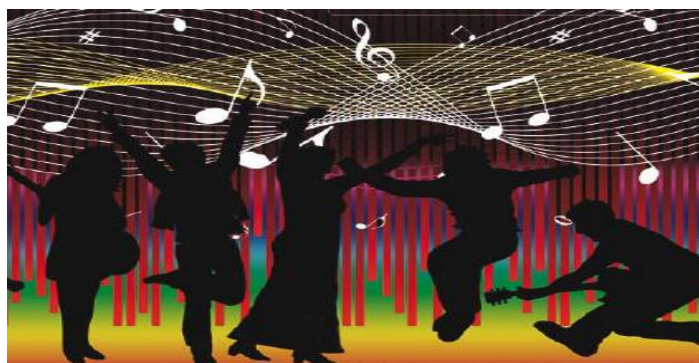
Detroit - Motor City

Detroit is one of the biggest cities in the Great Lakes region. It is in Michigan, close to Lake Erie.



In 1863, a man called Henry Ford was born in Detroit. Before Henry came along, it took a long time to make a car. Henry found a way to make cars more quickly, the production line. His first car was called the Model T Ford.

After Henry's discovery, Ford became a big car company and Detroit became the home of American carmakers. This is why Detroit has the nickname Motor City, or *Motown* for short.



Detroit has made amazing music since 1959 when *Motown Records* made its first single. Most Motown musicians are African American. Americans of all backgrounds love the Motown sound and Motown records are popular all over the world.

Famous Motown musicians include Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross and The Jackson 5.

Chicago - Windy City

Chicago is on the shores of Lake Michigan. It is the third biggest city in America.

Chicago is President Obama's hometown. He lived there with the First Lady Michelle Obama and his daughters Malia and Sasha, before they moved to the White House. If you'd like to more about President Obama just email reflond@state.gov. We'll send you info!



Chicago's nickname is the Windy City. This is because strong winds blow off Lake Michigan and in-between the city's tall skyscrapers.

Where was the first skyscraper built? In Chicago in 1895. Today, the city is home to many famous skyscrapers, including the Sears tower. The Sears tower is America's tallest building. It is 1,451 feet high!



Chicago was also the hometown of another famous American. Not a President, but a gangster called Al Capone.

America banned alcohol from 1919 to 1933. This was called Prohibition. Al Capone and other gangsters illegally brought alcohol into America and sold it in bars called "speakeasies".



Eventually, the law caught up with Al Capone. His illegal "speakeasies" were closed down by the famous police officer Eliot Ness and he was sent to jail for not paying his taxes!

State Symbols

Every State in America has special symbols. A State's symbol tells us something about it. State symbols can be anything from birds, to drinks, to flowers.



States in the Great Lakes have symbols too. In Wisconsin, the state *drink* is milk. Why? Because Wisconsin has lots of dairy farms. Dairy farms make milk, cheese and butter. Even supporters of the Wisconsin American football team are called "cheeseheads"!

The state *insect* of Ohio is the Ladybug. Why? Because ladybugs are friendly and able to live in tough weather, just like people from Ohio. Ladybug is the American word for ladybird.



If you could choose state symbols for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, what would they be and why?

Shipwrecks

The Great Lakes are so big some people call them seas. Like other seas, many ships have sunk in the waters.

In 1780, Britain's largest warship, HMS Ontario sank in Lake Ontario. No one found it until 2008! A ship called the Cyprus was unlucky. It sank in Lake Superior on its second voyage! And - in 1975 a winter storm wrecked the SS Edmund Fitzgerald, it was the biggest ship in all the lakes.



To help save other ships from that sinking feeling, lots of lighthouse have been built all over the Great Lakes.